

I know no other way

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/54296023) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/54296023>.

Rating:

Mature

Archive Warning:

No Archive Warnings Apply

Category:

M/M

Fandom:

Masters of the Air (TV 2024)

Relationship:

Gale "Buck" Cleven/John Clarence "Bucky" Egan

Characters:

Gale "Buck" Cleven, John Clarence "Bucky" Egan, Charles "Crank" Cruikshank

Additional Tags:

Drabble Collection, Drabble, Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence, Established Relationship, Affection, Smut, Fluff, Angst, Hurt/Comfort, Gale "Buck" Cleven Needs a Hug, Love, POV Outsider, Prisoner of War, Cuddling & Snuggling, Love Bites, Anal Sex, Riding, Kissing, Oral Sex, Friends With Benefits, Alternate Universe - Modern Setting, Alternate Universe - Bikers, Bikers, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder - PTSD, Post-War, Shapeshifting, Cats

Language:

English

Stats:

Published: 2024-03-06 Completed: 2024-11-13 Words: 15,728
Chapters: 18/18

I know no other way

by [Avonne](#)

Summary

Avonne's Tumblr drabble collection.

1. Canon AU - Buck is affectionate when he drinks
2. Canon AU - Crank watches Buck take care of Bucky
3. Canon AU - Bucky tells his new friends he shares a bunk with Buck
4. Canon AU - Bucky warms Buck's hand in the stalag
5. Canon AU - Bucky loves seeing his marks on Gale
6. Canon AU - Bucky puts his jealousy aside to comfort Gale
7. Gale rides John (NSFW)
8. Modern AU - Gale's oral fixation (NSFW)
9. Reverie drabble
10. Ex-biker AU drabble (NSFW)
11. Gale struggles with PTSD post-war
12. Part 2 of PTSD Gale
13. Canon AU - Gale has a secret double life
14. Canon AU - Gale is dosed with fear poison
15. Canon AU - mutual pining in England
16. Canon AU - a post-coital conversation
17. Canon AU - "body swap"
18. Canon AU - Domestic post-war sickfic

Notes

Hi lovelies, I decided to start collecting my MotA Tumblr drabbles here, on AO3 to keep track of them.

The collection is on Anon for now because I don't want all my user subscribers to get an email when I post a drabble. My Tumblr is avonne-writes, my actual AO3 account is Avonne.

The collection title is from Pablo Neruda's sonnet XVII:
*"I love you without knowing how, or when, or from where.
I love you straightforwardly, without complexities or pride;
So I love you because I know no other way
than this: where I do not exist, nor you,
so close that your hand on my chest is my hand,
so close that your eyes close as I fall asleep."*

Chapter 1: Tipsy Gale

Chapter Summary

Gale gets affectionate when he's tipsy

It took all of Bucky's charms to convince Gale to drink with them on Bucky's 25th birthday. He begged and pleaded and cajoled him with his best puppy dog eyes until that half-suppressed smile appeared on Gale's face, and he said. "Suppose I can stomach one glass."

So, they went to the nearest bar in town with all the other cadets who had a weekend pass. Bucky got them both a stiff drink, and they clinked glasses before throwing them back, to the cheers of Bucky's friends. Well, Bucky threw it back. Gale gave it a long look, then took about half a sip.

Bucky could see him shudder, his plump lips purse. He leaned back against the bar, his elbows on the counter, and snorted a laugh. "I can take it off your hands if you don't like it."

Gale just gave him a glance from the corner of his eye, then poured the whole thing down his throat. A muscle tightened in his jaw as he put his glass down, probably fighting nausea. He turned and put his palms flat on the bar as if to steady himself as the burning liquid settled in his stomach.

Bucky nodded at him, trying and failing to hold back a grin. "Look at you."

It was hard to tell in the bar's warm light, but Gale's cheeks seemed pink already. He blinked at his empty glass, then looked at Bucky and smiled as though he thought something was very funny. "Happy birthday."

Bucky's grin widened. He squeezed Gale's shoulder, then turned to gesture for the barkeep. "Another one for me and a ginger beer for my friend."

Bucky was on his third drink and just about starting to feel the buzz of it in his limbs when he noticed Gale watching him. They were seated in a booth by then, trapped in the corner by all the other guys who

came to celebrate with them. Their friends were trying to outyell each other as they all fought to tell the same story to a pair of hapless girls they managed to invite to the table. So no one paid any attention when Bucky turned to look at Gale and found him looking back. For a moment, they just stared into each other's eyes, then Gale averted his and smiled. Again, as if the world around him was the most amusing thing ever. He was flushed, his blue eyes shiny.

Bucky's lips curled into a wide grin. "Feeling good?" He asked. When Gale tried to control his smile and failed to wipe it off his face, he laughed. "Got you good, didn't it?"

Gale rubbed at his forehead and leaned against Bucky's side. His gaze lacked its usual sharp gleam and his hand moved in less measured gestures than usual - he was completely buzzed. "I'm fine."

"I can see that." Bucky chuckled. The fact that Gale was a lightweight didn't surprise him at all. Originally, he had thought that maybe he could get a few more drinks in him, but seeing him after only one, he knew that sticking to ginger beer for the rest of the night would probably be for the best. "Do you need some air?"

Gale shook his head. Then, Bucky felt it - under the table, Gale's fingers were hooked into the belt of his uniform. Who knew when they found their way there. They clung to him as he leaned back in his seat, and Gale's shoulders followed to find his again. A muscle twinged in Bucky's chest. His grin faded into something more muted as he studied Gale's flaming face, the way his smile dug deeper lines into his cheek whenever he glanced in Bucky's direction from the corner of his eyes, the way he bowed his head, and the shadows his eyelashes cast.

He couldn't resist, he bumped his knuckles lightly against Gale's cheek. It felt hot to the touch. The gesture made Gale snicker, then hide his face behind his free hand as he often did when he didn't want to draw attention to his laugh. With butterflies fluttering in his stomach, Bucky slid his arm behind Gale, palm coming to rest warmly on Gale's shoulder. He felt his own face heat up when, instead of staying still as usual, Gale leant his whole weight into the embrace as if he was starving for it. He even tipped his head back to rest it on Bucky's arm. His hand slipped to Bucky's thigh.

Bucky looked around, but none of their friends seemed to notice. Most of them were also well on their way to drunkenness. Only he was running behind, it seemed. A situation he couldn't say he was familiar

with, but given the state Gale was in, he thought that was a lucky thing. He leaned in to whisper into Gale's ear.

"Do you want to leave?"

Gale closed his eyes, still smiling, then nodded. That was all Bucky needed. With some effort, he managed to extricate them out of the booth, crawling over some of the guys, who shoved at him playfully before getting up to let Gale out too. Gale moved slowly, with the caution of someone who was doing his best not to appear drunk, but if someone knew him well enough, the abundance of joy in his expression was a dead giveaway. Buck Cleven wasn't prone to smiling at nothing or to moving his gaze back and forth between Bucky and the rest of the bar instead of keeping it fixed on one thing. Bucky pretended to be drunker than he was just to have an excuse to throw his arm around Gale. He started singing, and felt Gale's arm squeeze tight around his waist.

"Buck, you gotta do something before we all go deaf!" One of the guys called out to raucous laughter. Gale snickered again, clinging to Bucky a bit harder, then he started pushing Bucky towards the door.

"I'm coming back for that dice game, Bill!" Bucky pointed at them, and they all waved their arms at him to just leave already so that they could continue trying to woo the girls.

He and Gale made it outside in a few minutes.

They stumbled into a dark alley nearby, where Gale tugged at the lapels of Bucky's uniform until Bucky kissed him. His lips parted pliantly for Bucky's tongue, and he tasted so sweet that for a moment, Bucky thought he might get drunk on it too. It was a nice, languid kiss. Bucky could have pushed for more but he forced himself to pull back, because he had a feeling that a back-alley romp wasn't what Gale was actually being so needy for, and he could tell that he was right when the first thing Gale did when they parted was to drop his head to Bucky's shoulder.

When Bucky slid his hands up Gale's arms to his back to hug him, he wrapped his own arms around Bucky's waist. He sighed as the embrace closed around him.

They stayed like that for so long that Bucky thought Gale might have fallen asleep standing. But as he tried to pull away, the arms around him tightened.

Bucky breathed in deep. "You wanna sleep in my room tonight?" And this time, that was all he meant, sleep. He could sneak Gale into his hotel room, and they could cuddle as much as Gale needed.

Gale took a deep breath too and straightened up. He let Bucky go to rub at his own face. "Sorry about that." He cleared his throat. A frown formed between his eyebrows. It seemed that he was sobering up. "No, I'll be all right. You go back. It's your birthday after all. I think I will - go find a ride back to base."

"I'm not going back without you."

Gale looked at him. Even in the dim light, Bucky could tell that his eyes weren't quite clear yet, but some of the haze was gone. "I need a few more minutes."

Bucky leaned back against the wall and lit a cigarette. With his free hand, he reached out to hold Gale's. He was pleased when Gale didn't pull away. "I can wait."

Gale watched him wordlessly with that tipsy little smile on his face until Bucky finished his cigarette. When the last of it burnt down, Bucky threw the stub away and stepped into Gale's space again. He gave him a chaste kiss.

Gale bumped his forehead to his, then moved away. "I'm not drinking another one."

Bucky laughed and pushed him towards the main street. "Why not?"

Chapter 2: Outsider POV Stalag Hurt/Comfort

Chapter Summary

Crank watches as Buck cleans Bucky's wounds.

Crank has never seen Buck like this. He's not the kind of man who doles out physical affection to just anybody. Even with Bucky, Crank always saw him as someone who preferred proximity to actually reaching out and initiating an embrace or a clap on the back. Yet, here he is now, kneeling on the floor where Bucky passed out, Bucky's head cradled so carefully in his hands that Crank feels like he's intruding on something.

Buck's whole body seems to curve towards Bucky, as though he wants to shield him. There's a shattered look in his eyes that Crank has never seen before. He's running a wet cloth over Bucky's face and hair, wiping off the blood in slow, gentle strokes. All his attention seems to be focused on Bucky. Crank doubts that he even remembers they aren't alone.

When he clears his throat, Buck sniffs. "Can you help me put him on the bed?"

"Of course." Crank replies quietly. Together, they lay Bucky on a bunk and cover him with one of the few flimsy blankets they have. Buck pulls Bucky's head in his lap, sits back against the wall and continues cleaning him with the same raw look in his eyes. When he presses the cloth to a cut on Bucky's scalp, Bucky stirs and moans in pain, and his eyelids flutter until he manages to squint weakly up at Buck. He doesn't even glance around the room. Probably can't even tell that Crank is sitting by his feet. He doesn't react when Crank squeezes his shin, all his hazy focus is on Buck.

The next time the cloth touches his wound, Bucky is fully conscious of it, so his grunt of pain is even harder to hear, but Buck schools his expression into a smile.

"Come on." He says softly. The affection in his voice makes Crank feel like he should leave them alone for a while. "It's just a scratch."

Bucky closes his eyes and smiles.

Chapter 3: Stalag Rumours

Chapter Summary

Bucky tells some of his new friends that he shares a bunk with Gale.

It takes Bucky about a week in the camp to recover enough of his personality to socialize. He was a shell of himself for what feels like forever, but getting Gale back was like getting a second chance at life. He can feel himself healing with every hug, every touch of Gale's hand, every warm look. By the end of the week, he's well enough to open up to some of the younger guys who don't know him but who, for one reason or another, joined his ragtag team of friends.

They're watching a soccer game outside, soaking in the sunshine. Gale refused to come and decided to stay behind reading instead, but already after one week, Bucky wonders how long his dislike of sports will win over the boredom of camp life. Watching these games are one of the few things that bring a smile to Bucky's face here.

"God, I wish I could bottle this up." One of the boys, Alan or something, sighs as he tilts his head back in the sun.

"It gets so freakin' cold at night that if I don't share my bunk with this moron -" He shoves his friend, some short, tan guy called Billy, who pushes him back with a smile. "- then I can't sleep from my teeth chattering. And it's not even winter yet."

"I don't know how Cleven does it."

Bucky's interest perks up. "Does what?"

"Sleeping alone." Alan explains.

Billy shakes his head. "That man's made of stone or something."

"Buck doesn't sleep alone." Bucky says.

He'd know, given that he spent every single night since he arrived pressed to him head to toe. The first few times, when Bucky was really bad off and wasn't sure if he'd recover, Gale would spoon him from behind, his hand splayed over Bucky's heart. Nowadays, he's back to being the little spoon, which Bucky likes even more, because it lets him feel like he can put himself between Gale and the rest of the

world.

"He did when we got here. Before we were sorted apart." Alan makes a contemplative face. "Wasn't real keen on getting close and personal with us."

"He just didn't like your ugly mug." Billy teases and gets another friendly shove for it.

"I wonder who shares with him."

Bucky raises his eyebrows at the boys, the corners of his lips twitching to smirk. "Me."

He doesn't know what's more amusing, the look of utter admiration on the two boys' faces or the way Gale reacts half an hour later, when Bucky interrupts his reading to tell him what interesting rumours he heard.

Chapter 4: Hot and Cold

Chapter Summary

Bucky and Gale share a bunk in the stalag, Bucky runs hot, Gale runs cold

When Bucky feels the hem of his shirt being lifted under the blanket, his hand shoots down to capture Gale's wrist before it's too late. He's on his back in Gale's bunk, the stalag barrack's stale air cool and clammy around him. Gale's bony chin digs into his shoulder as Gale shifts. When Bucky turns his head, his stubbled cheek brushes Gale's forehead.

"Can't believe I'm saying this, but keep those hands above my clothes." He whispers. "I'm not keen on getting frostbite tonight."

Gale tips his face up. His ice cube nose drags along Bucky's jawline as his kisses trail up Bucky's neck. His fingers clench and unclench in Bucky's sweater where Bucky laid them flat. A few minutes pass. Gale doesn't say anything, but Bucky's resolve weakens all the same to his wordless cajoling. It's unfair, how easily Gale gets his way when it comes to him. But he can't stop it from happening.

He breathes a long sigh through his nose. "Fine."

He lets Gale's wrist go and lifts his clothes himself. Gale's hand slips in like a slab of ice passing over Bucky's burning stomach. He's almost surprised his skin doesn't hiss at the temperature difference.

"Shit." He groans when Gale's icy palm comes to rest on his lower belly. He pulls the clothes down over it and traps it with his own hands, hoping that will warm it up faster.

Gale laughs quietly into his neck. "I love you."

Well. Maybe, the frostbite was worth it after all.

Chapter 5: Love bites

Chapter Summary

Bucky is turned on after seeing his marks on Gale.

Gale is just trying to get dressed in peace in the officers' quarters, but to Bucky, it's like a personal morning show. He's there for it as often as he can get away with it. There's nothing he loves more than the moment when Gale puts on his undershirt. As he stands there and watches him, glad that no one else is around, he catches a glimpse of his kisses' imprints on Gale's torso. He's instantly, desperately aching for Gale the moment he spots them. He wants to spread Gale out on the nearest flat surface and retrace the marks on the map of Gale's body. When Gale looks up, now in the process of buttoning his uniform, he catches the look in Bucky's eyes and his lips curl into a small smirk.

"One might just think you saw a pin-up girl in the flesh."

Bucky leans back against the wall, knowing full well that Gale can see how tight his pants got. "Gonna be a new moon tonight."

Gale hums, deliberately not picking up what Bucky's suggesting. It's a game he plays sometimes - he wants Bucky to say what he wants as specifically as he dares. It turns him on.

Bucky tries not to smile. It will come back to bite him in the ass if Gale gets too into the push-and-pull of it and makes him beg later. "Will be all dark outside."

"Nice time to sleep."

"Sleep, yeah." Bucky bites his lip, staring at Gale as intensely as he can until Gale finally looks at him, mischief in his blue eyes.

"Did you have something else in mind?"

Bucky double checks that the door is closed, then steps close to him, leaning in to run the tip of his nose along Gale's cheek to whisper in his ear. His hand presses to Gale's stomach, his thumb tracing one of the love bites he knows to be there under Gale's clothes. "How about a *rendez-vous* in that abandoned barn I found?"

Gale touches Bucky's hand with his fingertips, down the line of

Bucky's thumb. "Romantic."

Bucky presses a kiss to Gale's cheek. "Are you game?"

"Depends." Gale turns away from him to go root around in his footlocker. Bucky follows as if glued to him, his hands fitting themselves to Gale's hips from behind.

"On what?"

"Your intentions." Gale teases.

"All noble. You know me, I'm a gentleman." Bucky pulls Gale to his chest when Gale straightens up, wrapping his arms around Gale's waist. He kisses Gale's neck. "Only the best for my doll."

As always, Gale softens when he sweet talks him. "In the barn, you said?"

Bucky hums against Gale's skin. He can't resist any longer - he knows that Gale's going to play with him until he tells him what he wants. "I want to put new marks on you. These are fading."

He can feel Gale melt into his embrace. More of his weight presses to Bucky's chest. "I like the sound of that."

"I'll even suck you off."

Gale huffs a quiet laugh in surprise. "I see."

"Come on, Buck."

Gale rubs at Bucky's forearms. "How about that, but the other way around?"

A wide grin tugs at Bucky's lips. If that's what Gale's wants... He squeezes Gale's waist. "Deal."

Chapter 6: Jealousy and Comfort

Chapter Summary

The friendship between Alex and Buck makes Bucky jealous and resentful, but he still comforts Buck.

Bucky lies awake in the middle bunk he calls his, facing the cold, mold-speckled wall. Everything irritates him. The damp air, the guys' snoring, his flimsy blanket, that goddamn Tuskegee guy, *Alex Jefferson* or something, oh-so-fancy and for what? Sauntering in here and sticking his nose where he shouldn't. He should learn when to back off.

And why is Gale encouraging it anyway? All smiley and pink-cheeked when they're together discussing who knows what. Bucky would apparently be bored by it as Gale so kindly informed him when he tried to join them. Well, fuck him then. Fuck both of them. Bucky is fine on his own. He's completely fine.

He hears a rustle behind him, then the soft tap of feet on the ground. There's only one person who's able to climb off the top bunk with such grace, and he sure as hell doesn't want to talk to him. He crosses his arms tighter, pretending to sleep.

He gets it, if he were honest. Alex seems like a man full of life and a wit to match Gale's own. He still holds the cheerful, good-natured aura that Bucky flayed off himself sometime between that dreadful call to the base in London and winter in this icy hell. He's just a shell now. Going nuts day by day. Of course Gale doesn't need him anymore. Doesn't want to drag his skeleton around.

Fingers drum gently at his shoulder. When he doesn't react, Gale's whole palm presses down and rocks him as if to shake him awake. Bucky shouldn't - he really shouldn't - he promised himself -

With a quiet sigh, he turns around. He couldn't resist.

In the watchtower light that comes in through the dirty window, Gale's eyes look too bright, the weary lines of his face pronounced. The shadows highlight how much weight he lost. He drapes his right arm on the edge of Bucky's bunk, then props his chin up on it. He watches Bucky like that in silence until Bucky raises a hand and combs it through his hair.

Bucky breathes out heavily again, then grabs the edge of his tattered blanket and opens his cocoon of warmth for Gale to slip into it. Gale's agile body makes the climb just as quietly as he did the way down. He has his own blanket with him, which he drapes over them both. He didn't bring his pillow though, so they have to share - facing each other, only inches away.

As the space between them warms again, they stare at each other. They don't need to talk at this point. Bucky knows when it's a nightmare and when it's sheer exhaustion that pushes Gale into his arms, and he also knows that words have lost their power, ground into dust over the past endless months. Only the body remains, and the hints of comfort love can still push through.

Bucky's anger is gone as if it never existed. He curls his arm around Gale's back, and when Gale closes his eyes, he presses a kiss to his forehead.

Chapter 7: Riding

Chapter Summary

Gale rides John

The bed creaks as Gale's thighs tense again, moving him up and down on top of John. His right hand is on John's knee for balance, the left thumbs at John's side when he rocks back into the thick, blunt pressure of John's cock. It spreads him relentlessly open to his core, and he moans softly at the stretch of it every time it sinks in as deep as it can go.

Gale's got a good rhythm going and the perfect angle to hit that sweet, tingling spot when he grinds down. He doesn't need any input from John - the big, warm hand John has around Gale's leaking cock is nice, but it's not a need - as long as John stays put, he can sate his desires just by riding him. Tipping his head back against the waves of pleasure, Gale lets himself get lost in it. They've done this enough times that he doesn't feel self-conscious anymore. He knows that with John, he's safe to have sex just for the mindless, physical bliss, if that's what he needs. He knows he can enjoy John's body openly, without shame.

So he does. Gale rolls his hips slowly and then faster, then slower again, how he craves it at the moment, his eyes closed and his lips open to let small gasps escape. The fire builds in him. He can feel it spread, can feel his cock leak more on John's stomach, and the hardness slamming into him when he rocks back on it makes his mouth water. He's close now. Just a few more thrusts and -

Suddenly, his balance shifts. John's leg moves under his hand, and an arm wraps around Gale's waist as John sits up, kisses a messy path up Gale's sweaty-hot neck, then captures his lips. He kisses Gale hungrily, as if he had been holding himself back from it, and Gale licks into John's mouth in return, happy to share John's passion for it. But that spot in him throbs and aches, and his cock jumps between their stomachs when he thinks about how close that delicious peak is. Gale doesn't want to lose that momentum - he wants to come and come *now*.

He breaks the kiss after a moment and pushes John flat on his back again to be able to use his cock how he wants, to get his relief. He keeps his hands on John's chest this time, feels his thick pecs move up

and down with every breath, sounds rumble in John's rib cage when Gale rocks just right for them both. It's good. It's amazing - and Gale lets his eyes close again. He bites his lower lip and moves, *there there there* -

John pushes him out of balance again. He sits up once more and gathers Gale close to kiss him noisily, chasing the bite of Gale's teeth on Gale's lip with his own teeth, then his soothing tongue. Gale loves making out with him, but he's desperate now, he just wants to get the pleasure John promised when he pulled him into the bedroom. He has no more patience for kissing. He pushes John down roughly and pins his hands on either side of his head on the mattress.

"Stay put." Gale says breathlessly, trying to drive the message home even though he sees the cheeky glint in John's eyes. "I'm so..." He sighs as he rocks back again. "I'm so close."

"So fucking hot." John groans and bucks his hips into it.

Gale's lips fall open. "Do that again."

John obeys, pushing into him the way Gale craves, deep and hard where he aches, and he can feel the sweet taste of bliss on his tongue -

But John wrestles himself out of his hold and sits up again under him to kiss him through a smile.

"Disobeying direct orders now, Major?" Gale mumbles into the kiss, too fond of John to be truly irritated. He wraps his arms around John's shoulders and strokes him wherever he can reach.

"Never claimed to be a model soldier." John grins and brushes their lips together again. "I love you so much."

Gale's face burns. He presses it to John's and lets himself be kissed. The pleasure can wait.

Chapter 8: TA AU drabble

Chapter Summary

Gale has an oral fixation

Chapter Notes

This is a snippet from a modern AU where Gale and John are graduate students and friends with benefits. I'm planning to write this AU, but not yet sure when, so I decided to share this in the meantime.

Exam papers flutter on the desk of Gale's supervisor as the fragrant spring breeze swirls in through the open window. The Astrophysics department's small office smells like old bookshelves, leather and coffee, more comforting than the Business School's sterile ultramodern building. But John isn't here to examine the decor - he came to entertain Gale because he thought it was unfair that he had to be holed up inside, grading papers when the weather was so nice.

That, and because John wanted to kiss him.

It's all he can think about lately. His best friend's lips, their plump cushion under his own, the taste of them, soft skin between John's teeth. Given their amazing, perfect, completely causal agreement that they'd help each other out quick and easy if needed, he didn't have any hangups about it. But he did think it would be weird to just ask to make out without an end goal, so he pretended to be horny as an excuse, even though he wasn't.

He just didn't count on Gale being the one who'd be too turned on to resist a quickie right where they could be caught anytime.

"Jesus Christ, Buck." John hisses in the rolling chair of Gale's supervisor, his hips twitching to thrust into Gale's hand. In the grip of Gale's pale fingers, he throbs with hot need, Gale's spit slicking his length to make the friction just right as Gale strokes him. "Warn a guy next time."

"Warn?" Gale asks, lust low in his voice. He's kneeling between John's spread legs, halfway under the desk. With his free hand, he tugs John's trousers and boxers down to bare his thighs completely.

"We started this whole thing because you said it would be convenient. That we could have each other anytime, no strings attached." He presses his lips to John's right thigh and bites down gently, his teeth digging into John's muscle. "I want you now."

"Fuck." John breathes out, gripping the armrests. He needs to swallow the moans already pressing at his throat, the guttural, helpless noises he tends to make in Gale's bedroom, because they're one curious professor away from scandal. "Can we close the window at least?"

"Nah." Gale nuzzles his thigh again, the corner of his lips curling into a smile. "I know you're a good boy, John."

John throws his head back against the headrest. "I'm really not."

He feels the huff of Gale's laugh on his leg. "Yes, you are." Gale sucks on a strip of John's skin noisily until it colours pink, sensitive. His expression is pure bliss. "My good boy."

A surprised whimper escapes John's throat. "What?"

Gale freezes for a moment, as if caught, but he goes back to rubbing and kissing John's thigh a second later. "Nothing."

"I don't know what came over you." John mumbles breathlessly, slouching in the chair to give Gale better access to his cock, to chase Gale's teasing hand. His own fingers find their way to Gale's blond hair and tug as Gale leaves a hard bite on the meat of his thigh to mirror his work on the other side.

When Gale bats his right hand away, he puts the left on Gale's head instead. Gale gives him an exasperated look, then sits back on his haunches to get away from his demanding touch. His eyes roam over John's body lazily, his fist still moving up and down.

"You didn't sit like that on purpose?"

"Hm." John hums, pushing into Gale's hand. The chair rolls back a little, so he tightens the cradle of his legs around Gale's torso to stay in place. "Like what?"

"Like you wanted your dick sucked."

John closes his eyes as a wave of heat rolls down from the top of his head to his toes. "You have an oral fixation, I swear."

"Uh-huh." Gale just hums, his entire focus on John's cock now. He strokes his left hand over the bruises he sucked into the meat of John's right thigh, then he cups John's balls.

"Ah, fuck. You don't even deny it."

Gale looks up at him from under his lashes as he leans forward. His body warm between John's thighs, his lips glistening.

"Why deny it?" He shrugs and kisses the tip of John's cock. Closing his eyes, he runs his pink tongue up the underside of it to the head, catching the drops of moisture beading there slowly from the torturous pleasure he inflicts on John's body. When John grunts, Gale looks at him again. There's a playful glint in his eyes. "Be good now, Bucky."

John puts his right hand back on Gale's head and presses his left fist to his mouth as hot, warm suction slides down his length and pulls his pleasure right out of his soul. Shadows pass behind the opaque glass of the door opposite him, people walking down the corridor. The star charts on the walls mirror the stars he sees behind his eyes as Gale sucks him leisurely, without a care in the world. *No one walks into Astrophysics at four p.m. on a Friday, right?* John prays, and squeezes his eyes shut against the pleasure as he thrusts into Gale's mouth.

He's gonna cancel his plans of going out and will take Gale home again tonight.

Chapter 9: Reverie drabble - 40 years in the future

Chapter Summary

A drabble set in the universe of my fic, [Reverie](#), about 40 years after the fic.

Chapter Notes

Edit: I have now created a drabble collection for Reverie drabbles, where this added again, but I don't want to delete it from this collection because I want to keep the lovely comments and discussion on it.

Bucky hums along to the music coming from the radio as he shuts off the stove and sets the table for dinner. *These new kids ain't that bad*, he thinks as he tries to recall what their band's name is. They have just said it on the broadcast but he already forgot. Well, doesn't matter, he loves the upbeat, catchy melodies, the same way he loved the disco tunes of the 70s. Gale hates it, naturally, like he hates everything that isn't at least 30 years old.

Grouchy old man, Bucky smirks to himself as he gets the little metal cases containing their daily medicine. They have matching pin-up girl designs, "retro" art, if he got that right when he bought the damn things for Christmas last year. Gale called him sentimental for it, but then he was the one sniffing back his emotions as Bucky playfully counted which one of them had more pills to take per day. He never got to call a winner - Gale reached out with his pale fingers, a bit shaky since his last hospital stay, and pulled Bucky's hand away. *Weather forecast's in five minutes*, he said as he tugged Bucky towards the television. *Oh, the weather forecast*, Bucky chuckled back then, and he chuckles at the memory now. *Any cumulonimbuses tonight?* In response, Gale gave him a look that conveyed all fifty-something years of exasperated love he held for Bucky and pressed him down into his favourite armchair.

Bucky isn't sure if Gale could press him down anywhere now. But it's okay, he's gonna gain his strength back, Bucky knows. It's only been two weeks since they gave him the A-okay and let Bucky take him home from the hospital again. Gotta give it some time. It's not like

they have any reason to rush things now, do they? They have all the time in the world.

"Dinner's ready, doll!" He calls out and pokes at the pills on Gale's plate until they form a smiley face. Silence fills their home with a peaceful lull. The sky blushes outside as the sun sets with broad, warm rays that stream in through the kitchen window. "Gale!"

No answer. There's a tinge of worry in Bucky's chest but he swallows it down and walks through the living room to the back, where he sees that their bedroom door is slightly ajar. When he pokes his head inside, he finds Gale fast asleep on top of the covers, curled up on his side as always. Bucky's knitted cardigan lies draped over his too-thin frame.

The worry in Bucky's heart dissolves into something tender and familiar. As quietly as he can, he shuffles over to his side of the mattress and forces his creaking knees to lower his body on it gently. Gale doesn't stir. There's a faint smile on his face as he naps, his hands tucked under his head. He's so beautiful that Bucky feels like he could stare at him forever. At the wrinkles of his laugh lines, the soft fall of his silver hair, much fuller than Bucky's own, at the scar on his cheek. Memories etched into his skin, each and every one of them matching one of Bucky's own.

Bucky shifts to lie down beside him, grunting as he settles on his side, then strokes Gale's cheek with the back of his hand. Gale doesn't wake up, but he nuzzles his pillow and mumbles something. Bucky wonders what he dreams of. Is it more memory than fantasy? They rarely venture anywhere new anymore, but still, one can always wonder. And Gale might be tired here, in this exhausting, complicated world, where he has to carry the weight of a life in his limbs, but in his mind, oh, Bucky knows how young he is in there.

Slowly, he curls towards Gale's body and presses a kiss to his cheek, then a few more to the underside of his jaw until Gale starts snickering in his sleep, then wakes up. He blinks up at Bucky with his sky blue eyes, then closes them again and reaches out with both arms. As easy as breathing, he rolls Bucky into his embrace, and they settle down with Bucky's face pressed to Gale's neck and their legs tangled.

"Where did you go?" Bucky murmurs, stroking Gale's side.

"I don't know." Gale's deep voice rumbles against his forehead.

Bucky knows that *I don't know* means the fragments of their first

dreamscape. The cabin, the river, the woods. Laundry drying in the sunshine. Memories upon memories layered over each other, and never coherent again in Gale's mind. But lately, it seems, Gale likes the blur. He keeps drifting back there nowadays. Not to search for something or to build on the rubble, but to remember. To relive.

Gale's fingers comb through Bucky's hair. "I dreamt that we had a puppy." He says, tone light with amusement. "It licked my face."

Bucky chuckles into the warm space between them. He drags the tickling strands of his moustache over Gale's skin. "Huh. Strange."

In his embrace, he can feel Gale going boneless again. Drifting off to his dreamscape. He naps a lot nowadays. But it's okay. They have nowhere else to be. Dinner can wait.

"Can I come see?" Bucky whispers.

"Always." Gale mumbles, and a few minutes later, when he pulls Bucky into his dreams, he's blond and full of life again, running through the haze of a warm memory, and Bucky chases him as if nothing hurt and they were both okay.

Chapter 10: Ex-biker AU drabble

Chapter Summary

Gale is an ex-bikerider turned mechanic and Bucky is a college student 12 years his junior. Inspired by The Bikeriders, of course. Might become a standalone, longer fic in the future.

[BRUSH] sender brushes / styles receiver's hair

Bucky gags softly as Gale's cock pushes down into his throat, filling him so thoroughly that he can't feel anything but that thick, hard stretch. Dark blond hair brushes his nose, but just for a second before Gale's hips draw back.

"Sorry." Gale gasps, leaving only the head of his cock to slide over Bucky's tongue. Back and forth in small thrusts.

Bucky moans in an attempt to show how much he liked it and bobs his head to take more, but Gale fists a hand in his curls and pulls him back. He keeps Bucky in place and uses only his mouth. The muscles of his tattooed arm flex. It's infuriating how much self-control he has. Bucky always tries to make him lose it, but only a few minutes is the most he gets of the wild beast of Gale's desire.

When he tries to move again, Gale's hand tightens in his hair, on the pleasant side of painful. "Such an eager boy."

Bucky moans again, trying to look up at Gale through his hazy eyes. He loves it when Gale reminds him of their twelve-year age gap. Loves it even more when Gale's low voice sounds warm with praise. They're in the back office of Gale's mechanic shop, Gale on the old, tattered couch and Bucky bruising his knees on the hard ground, spreading Gale's thighs wide with the bulk of his torso. Gale's coveralls are unzipped to give Bucky access to his cock, and Bucky uses this chance to slide his hand up over the sweat-damp skin of Gale's stomach and the trail of hair there, over his abs to the hills of his chest, where he thumbs at the curve of a pec distractedly.

With his free hand, Gale traps Bucky's fingers there and tips his head back as his thrusts start getting rougher again. Controlled and careful, but dancing on the edges of Bucky's craving. They're quiet for a

moment, with only the slick sounds of Gale using Bucky's mouth and Gale's heavy breaths to fill the office. The clank of tools and buzzing machinery drifts in from outside sometimes, making Bucky's cock twitch in his jeans. A part of him wants someone to walk in on them. He burns up with the delicious idea of being found with Gale's cock in his mouth.

"Almost there, Bucky." Gale lets out a grunt, and when Bucky hums in satisfaction at the words, he gasps and spills in thick rivulets over Bucky's tongue.

When it's over, Bucky pulls back and swallows, relishing the lust that shivers through him at the taste.

Gale stares at him with half-lidded eyes, pink bottom lip bitten-dark and skin flushed. He lets go of Bucky's hand and hair to wipe at his own face. Bucky wants to kiss his scars. The ones sliced into his cheeks. Rumour says they're from fights he got into back when he used to ride in a bike club. But from the way Gale clams up if Bucky pries, Bucky has his doubts.

"You're so good at this." Gale sighs in contentment.

Bucky's smug grin comes instantly. "Practice."

Gale bumps his knees against him and shakes his head like he doesn't believe him, but he doesn't say anything. He lets Bucky tuck him back into his underwear, then kiss a trail up to his chest.

"No shirt today?" Bucky grins against the warm skin, nuzzling the hair there.

"Hot day." Gale's voice rumbles above him.

"Because you knew I was coming in?"

Although Gale has never even let Bucky come around to his house, Bucky feels like he knows him enough to know that he's feeling caught and wants to squirm.

"No, because it's a 100 degrees out there."

Bucky snorts. When he sits back on his haunches, both of Gale's hands reach for his face. He's confused until he feels them slide into his dark locks. They pet him for a moment, and Bucky takes it with a happy smile. He likes being touched like this. Gale's eyes don't meet his,

focused on Bucky's hair, but Bucky doesn't mind. He watches the tip of Gale's tongue peek out between his lips before sliding back as Gale starts combing Bucky's curls into place to make him more presentable.

"That's better." Gale says, like a pat on his own back.

Bucky thinks he might be a little bit in love with him. When Gale's blue eyes finally slide down to meet his, he pushes up and kisses him.

Chapter 11: Cold

Chapter Summary

Gale struggles with PTSD post-war.

Chapter Notes

Inspired by the last scene of *The Bikeriders*

Bucky whistles an idle tune to himself as he finishes patching up the roof where a late summer storm tore into it. He hopes it was the last one to wash over the land this year - it's starting to feel like his favourite blue skies are playing a joke on him, making him climb up the ladder week after week. But, for now, he's done. The sweat rolling down the dirt on his arms in tickling lines feels like satisfaction, and the ache in his muscles makes him feel alive. He enjoys the sunshine pinching his cheeks pink and the cooler breeze that combs through his curls. It helps put the war out of a man's mind.

On most days, anyway.

With a deep, tired sigh, Bucky steps off the ladder and gathers his tools to put them away. As he circles around the house, he can hear the muffled buzz of the radio through the kitchen window, an upbeat song playing. For a moment, it fills him with hope. Perhaps, Gale found it in himself to get out of bed and cook. It wouldn't be the first time that he turned his day around. Hooked onto that spark that held them all up through war and cold and imprisonment. He knows it's still there on Gale's bad days too.

It's with this hope swelling in his chest that Bucky rounds the corner, but his steps falter when he spots Gale in an old chair he must have dragged down from the porch to the driveway, where the setting sun still warms the ground. His messy, too-long hair looks golden in the light. There's a book on his lap, but he's not reading it. His head is tilted down and turned to the side, as if he's listening to a noise only he hears.

From the way things have been lately, he probably is.

He seems unaware of the world around him. Like a ghost, he's stuck

between realms, but the teeth of his trap are the present and the past. It has been like this since they came home three years ago. Every now and then, Gale forgets that he's still among the living. He stares into nothing the way he used to stare in those quiet moments of despair when there was nothing to do in the stalag, and when Bucky touches him, he shivers.

Nowadays, Gale can tell when he's going to have a day like this and he doesn't even get up from their bed. Bucky can't make him - he's just as stubborn about it as he used to be about taking the left seat. It's the shame, Bucky figures, because he knows it himself, the shame of being too weak to fight those shadowy memories. He's surprised that Gale is trying to push himself out of it today.

"Finished the roof." He raises his voice as he approaches.

No reaction, but he expected that. He's used to filling Gale's silences. Enjoys it, even, unless that silence is born out of pain. He puts his toolbox down on the porch steps and grabs the jacket he draped over the railing when the sun crept high enough in the morning for him to be in his shirtsleeves. For a moment, he lets himself thumb at its soft lining and remembers his white sheepskin, the one Gale hated so much. Nostalgia lingers bittersweet in his mouth. They aren't the same men they were back then, and they never will be. That jacket wouldn't fit Bucky the way it used to anymore.

He shakes the thought out of his head and crosses the patchy lawn to Gale.

"All my fingers made it this time." He chuckles, referring to the nasty cut he accidentally gave himself a few weeks ago.

Gale is so far gone in his head that he doesn't seem to have heard Bucky's voice at all. His arms are trembling. Just faintly, but Bucky can tell. He wonders which part of Germany it is this time, which month. The first winter? The march into walls of ice and snow? The run Gale made without him, through cold mud, blood and fear?

It doesn't matter. The war is long gone, and if Gale needs it, Bucky can pile all their warm clothes on him until his body remembers that it's still summer. He has the means to give that to him now.

With his tired, work-roughened hands, he drapes his jacket over Gale's chest and arms. He makes sure it covers Gale where his skin is bare, where his body might mistake the breeze for a knife. As he pulls back, he lets the back of his right hand caress Gale's scarred cheek and the

stubble dusting his jawline.

Gale's sad eyes blink, then turn away from the barren ground to look up at the sky. Blue reflected in blue, and golden light.

When his gaze finds Bucky's face, Gale smiles.

Chapter 12: Night Shadows

Chapter Summary

Part 2 of the verse where Gale struggles with severe PTSD.

Chapter Notes

Adding this from Tumblr :)

The thin summer blanket falls over Bucky's frame like a veil, in soft folds. He lies still in his and Gale's bed and imagines he's one of those timeless marble sculptures that look like people frozen in motion, with their clothes still ruffled by the breeze. A part of him longs for that oblivion, but a prickling awareness pulls him further away from sleep. The space on his left, where warmth and peace should press up against him, is as cold as the stone in Bucky's fading dream.

He cracks his eyes open to the shroud of the night and traces the silhouettes drawn by the pale moonlight that slips in through the curtains. Nothing lives and breathes around him, nothing moves. It's only empty space.

Half-asleep, fear is a shock, a bucket of cold water after a bad evening spent drinking. He wrestles his marble bindings off and slips out of bed. His bare feet pad on thick carpet, then cool floor. His elbow brushes a doorframe a touch too hard, and the scrape of it draws a hiss, but nothing whispers back in the dead silence.

"Buck?" He calls out in that low, groggy voice that always gets him a fond smile in the morning. "You okay?"

There's no reply, but the living room gapes danger with its dark and empty space, and Bucky's heart kicks up its frantic beats. He looks around, squints, reaches for the lightswitch, but then he spots it - a pair of feet behind the couch.

He runs before the flood of dread could even materialize as a thought - he doesn't think that Gale could be hurt or dead, he feels it. In his rush, he knocks into the coffee table that Gale apparently moved into the way, but he ignores the blooming pain and throws himself right

down on the floor to grab the body lying lifeless in cold, wet liquid.

"Gale!" He exclaims. His fear drums so loud in his ears that he barely hears the gasp of surprise he draws, but the scrambling hands he does feel, as they scratch and grip at his shoulders in blind, animal panic.

"It's me. It's me." He shifts his hold from Gale's arms to his wrists and holds them away from the wounded skin of his neck until Gale calms and goes limp.

"Jesus Christ." Bucky breathes out in tired relief and pulls those hands to his chest, keeps them pressed there with his left while he cups Gale's cheek with his right. "You scared me."

When Gale doesn't reply, Bucky's heart clenches in a different kind of worry - the gentle, bittersweet kind that creeps around your heart like an embrace. It's the worry of familiarity, the pain that comes from knowing what's coming and yet being powerless to do anything but watch how much damage the crash of a wave does against the shore.

"Don't do this to me, doll. Not again." The plea slips out of his mouth quietly. It feels like defeat.

Gale doesn't hear it.

"They're out there." He whispers. His voice never sounded like this during the war, not even when they were on that train of death or when they plotted their escape - this voice knows neither reason, nor reality. "They're coming."

Bucky shifts his grip on Gale's hands, holding them both between his chest and his palm, and slides the other hand down Gale's body to feel around for injuries. Wetness seeps into his pajamas from the puddle he's kneeling in. It's dripping from Gale's body, but it's not blood. Thank God, thank every saint for that. It's ice cold water, and Gale is sopping wet with it.

"No one's coming." Bucky tries to soothe Gale. He wishes he spared that fraction of a second he would have needed to turn on the lights, because in the darkness, he can't see Gale's expression, just the white flash of his gaze sometimes as he stares at Bucky in wide-eyed horror.

"Shhh." Gale shushes him. "Lie down or they'll notice you." Gale's breathing speeds up to an unnatural, panicked rhythm, then goes slow so suddenly that it gives Bucky whiplash.

"Must join them to make it. Must join them." He mutters under his breath. It doesn't sound like he knows he's speaking.

Bucky knows what he's doing. He put it together from the fragments Gale gave him during his episodes - he's on the run from the march, lying in a ditch among the dead to avoid being noticed by the German troops passing through the forest. In his right mind, Gale barely told him anything but the plain facts of what happened. Filth and rotting corpses only a few feet away from the retreating men. *I made it out, it doesn't matter, John*, he said that one time Bucky brought it up. But if something wakes him up wrong at night, it's either this moment he loses his sanity to, or the darkest days of their captivity.

Usually, Bucky tries to wake him from it. He has tried it gently and rougher too, but it's always a tough wall to break, and he's tired. Too tired to be the voice of reality. What if it helps more to play along?

He keeps stroking Gale's face and neck but lies down next to him just like Gale urges him to in half-finished sentences. The cold water drenches him in discomfort, but he pays it no notice, only Gale's laboured breathing.

"Quick, quick." Gale says, voice shaking now, and he pulls his hands out of Bucky's grip to strip his wet shirt. He lays it on Bucky's stomach, then goes still. "It rained, if you're dry, they'll see it."

That explains it, Bucky thinks as they lie together on the floor. Safe in their home, but hiding from the demons in Gale's mind. Bucky wonders if Gale went to the bathroom to splash water on his face but ended up here instead. He wonders if he didn't switch on the light because he didn't want to wake Bucky and if that's what got him confused. It happened before. And yet, Gale continues to try being considerate.

It breaks Bucky's heart.

He waits a few seconds, counts to ten in his head, then opens his mouth to whisper, "I think they're gone now."

With his hand gripping Bucky's, Gale stops breathing for a moment, as if listening for the sound of footsteps, but, of course, there's nothing. When Gale believes it too, his body relaxes, and he sits up. He pulls his knees up, puts his elbows on them, then buries his face in his hands.

Bucky discards the wet shirt and moves behind Gale to hug him. He

wraps his arms around Gale's shivering torso and closes his eyes against the memories it brings up, the cold and the stalag. He pulls Gale back into his chest. A long kiss to Gale's bare shoulder, then a soothing path of them up, better than any feeble word he'd try to say. Words he did say in the past, grains of sand in the wind.

It's only when Gale goes boneless and tries to crumple forward that he knows it's over, and what he says would be heard.

"It's okay. You're okay." He kisses Gale's temple, willing them both to believe it. The seconds tick by like a quiet metronome. They fly past, into the horizon of minutes, but the night feels so vast that it's as if they're floating in nothing.

"This floor needed mopping anyway." Bucky says in a lighter tone once he thinks that Gale's ready for it.

Gale bursts into tears.

As always, it's devastating. Bucky had been through pain and loss and hell with him, and Gale never once shed a tear. But since they returned, like taking a tourniquet off a wounded vein, the missing pressure to stay strong left him torn open and bleeding. Nothing hurts more than not being able to make it better. Just hoping for time to heal what Bucky can't.

"I'm sorry." Gale's voice is like a ghost passing through the house. It stabs Bucky all the same.

"Don't worry about it, Buck. You know me. Not the first time I sat in a puddle, hoping to get someone into bed with me." He tightens his arms as he says it, rocking Gale, but he feels the tremors of silent crying continue to run through Gale's body. "I love you."

A sob escapes Gale before he could clamp down on it. He forces himself to go still when it passes, then drops his hands and snuffles. "Does that line tend to work?"

The smile on Bucky's lips is bittersweet. "Dunno, doll, you tell me. Never used it before."

Gale breathes in deep, then lets it out. Little by little, his body starts to settle down again. The shaking ceases. "I may need to hear it again." He swallows against his remaining tears, then leans his head against Bucky's. "To make sure."

Bucky hums. "Let me try my luck in a hot bath. For the acoustics."

That finally earns him a small, wet laugh. "Sure, Bucky."

Germany's frozen forests are never farther away than in the steamy warmth of their bathroom, in each other's embrace.

Chapter 13: Double Life

Chapter Summary

Gale has a secret double life.

Chapter Notes

Written for the prompt: forced to lie

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

Gale pads across the space between two barracks on light, quick feet. He's on the prowl, his senses alert and mind happy and clear. Sweet summer smells tickle his nose and make his lips twitch. The waning moon shines bright tonight, casting long shadows over the grass that brushes his slender legs in the most pleasing way. He marvels at his own dark silhouette, stopping to admire it fully.

That's his mistake. He rarely allows himself a moment of vanity, but, apparently, one moment is enough to earn its due punishment - he's noticed.

"Hey." The slightly slurred, cajoling voice sounds familiar. The hair stands up on the back of Gale's neck at the prospect of being caught in the state he's in by none other than his best friend. He's frozen in place, staring with wide blue eyes as Bucky walks closer with slow steps, his arms outstretched in a way that's supposed to look welcoming.

"Hi there, beautiful." Bucky coos. "Where did you come from, huh?"

"From the pub, where you left me." Gale hisses, because he's still a little pissed about that. He isn't too fond of wrangling drunk, rowdy soldiers while Bucky is outside, chasing skirts in an alleyway. So, Gale came back to base, then snuck out to do some chasing of his own.

Bucky, of course, doesn't understand.

"It's okay. Don't be scared." A few feet away from Gale, he crouches, almost falling over in his drunken state. With his sharp sight, Gale can see the cheerful twinkle in his eyes. "Come here. Kitty, kitty, kitty."

"I ought'a scratch you." Gale growls, irritated that his midnight fun has been interrupted. He can hear all the fucking whiny mice scurrying

around the base. He could have had a veritable feast!

"I know, I know." Bucky soothes him quietly, inching closer. "I promise I'm very respectful. No tail pulling, no tummy touching. Just wanna pet you, princess."

"Jesus, John." Gale drawls. He could bolt, make a run for it. Wouldn't be much of an effort, but then, he'd leave Bucky dejected. He doesn't have the heart to do it, not after the last missions they had. So many lives lost, so little comfort to be had. He, too, only has the cradle of the moonlight and his best friend.

The friend whose face splits into his disarming, squinty-eyed smile as his palm comes into contact with Gale's back. "Good girl."

"I'm not a goddamn girl." Gale protests in a long meow as he's picked up, his fluffy tail lashing back and forth. Nevertheless, Bucky's hold feels comfortable, clearly familiar with the feline form as he tucks Gale to his chest. The solid warmth of his body feels like a balm to a wound on Gale's soul that he didn't even realize he had. Oh, how he missed to be cared for.

"There." Bucky murmurs, holding him with one arm and using his other hand to stroke Gale's cream-coloured fur gently. Over his head, down his back and side, then scratching gently behind his ear. "What a pretty kitty."

Gale can't help it, he closes his eyes and leans into the touch. It has been so long since he felt physical affection beyond a pat on the back or a careless arm around his shoulders, and even longer since anyone touched him in this form. He missed it, he realizes. Feeling warm and safe like this again might be even better than catching annoying pests. Within two seconds, he's purring with the joy of it, boneless in Bucky's hold. His legs dangle over Bucky's arm. He thinks about kneading him, either to satisfy his instinct to reciprocate or to sink his claws into his skin in retaliation for being left in the pub, but it's too much effort.

"Aren't you sweet?" Bucky chuckles and sways in place as if Gale was a baby. Or, perhaps he's just too drunk to stand upright for more than a minute. He's silent for a long moment, just thumbing at Gale's silky shoulder, then opens his mouth again. "Oh, Curt would've loved you."

Gale stops purring and looks up at him. Tears glisten in Bucky's dark eyes. Bucky sniffs, then chuckles wetly and goes back to massaging Gale's ear, to get him to purr again, Gale assumes. Overcome with sadness and sympathy, he obliges. Lets the rhythmic rumbling in his

chest comfort them both as they grieve together in silence. In and out goes the air in his lungs in soft purrs. Back and forth swipes Bucky's gentle thumb. All around them, the night is quiet and still warm with summer, but a cold breeze sweeps over the airfield.

"Will you bring me good luck, girl?" Bucky talks to him in drunken whispers. "Gotta go back up there soon. Watch my friends get blown up." He sighs, long and hard. "I'm glad I caught you. Miserable fucking night and all."

He sighs and pulls Gale higher to press his face to Gale's fur. "Had to leave the pub to clear my head. Felt fucking awful so I went back for another shot." He exhales in a long blow. "Where the hell did he go?"

Gale's heart clenches, but he refuses to acknowledge it as guilt. How could he have known it wasn't some pretty girl John went after? John never said a word about feeling unwell.

Gale rubs his head against John's neck in apology, deciding he deserves that kneading after all, but before he could get any further than extending his claws, another man passes by and notices them both.

"Is that a cat?"

Hell no, Gale's instincts scream, and his claws scratch at Bucky's uniform, flailing to get away. Bucky yelps and his arms loosen enough for Gale to jump free, landing on his four feet practically running. He flees the scene without looking back, sharp ears flicked back to listen to pursuing footsteps, but all he hears is a disappointed huff.

"Great job, private, you scared her away."

Relieved, Gale runs and runs until he's almost back where he's supposed to be, behind the Officers' Quarters. There, in the sanctuary of darkness, he concentrates and lets his limbs grow, his fur disappear, claws turn into nails, until he's back in his human form with the clothes he transformed in when he left on his hunt. He smooths his hands over his uniform, takes a deep breath to control his rapid panting, then walks back inside.

He's pretending to read in his bed when Bucky enters to stumble over to his own. He's uncharacteristically subdued as he makes quick work of his outer layers, and Gale doesn't know why, but he feels he needs to snap him out of it.

"Had a good night?" He asks quietly. He hates how easy it is to sound casual and unaffected about it.

"Fantastic." Bucky says, bitter at first before he puts on a smile. "Know that redhead, down the street from the baker?" He clicks his tongue as if to say, what a fine broad. "She likes my singing."

It's a lie, Gale knows, but he can't tell Bucky that. He can't reveal himself, nor does he want to draw light to something Bucky wants to hide from him. "I bet."

Bucky snorts, amused. What an ironic turn of phrase. "Hey, Buck."

"Hm."

Bucky pauses, brushing a hand over his discarded uniform. When Gale squints at it, he notices the layer of white fur on it in horror. Oblivious to Gale's pounding heart, Bucky smiles. "Have you seen a white cat around? Big one, long fur."

Yeah, I've looked into a mirror, Gale thinks. He can't say that though. No one is supposed to know. "No."

Bucky nods, running his hands over his clothes again. "I caught it, but some stupid private scared it away."

Gale swallows. "It will come back eventually."

Bucky lies down in his cot, his back to Gale. "Yeah. Maybe." For a moment, he's silent, then he adds, "But I might not be here."

Gale has nothing to say. The night feels too fragile to hold the weight of another lie. He can't promise something he can't control.

"Good night, Buck." Bucky mumbles after a few minutes.

"Night, John." Gale says. His skin itches.

He wishes he could curl up and purr.

It would make the world feel like a better place.

Cat!Gale headcanons always welcome on my Tumblr 

Chapter 14: Fear poison/gas

Chapter Summary

In the stalag, Gale gets dosed with fear poison/gas.

Chapter Notes

Cross-posting from Tumblr 🐾

A fist swings towards Crank's face, but it ends up colliding with the arm he raises in defense. Buck groans in pain as Hambone and Jefferson jump in to intervene and tackle him to the floor of their crowded room in the stalag. The three of them start wrestling on the floor accompanied by curses, grunts and Buck's panicked wheezing.

"What the fuck did they give him?" Hambone yells as one of the chairs is knocked over by Buck's legs kicking out.

"No idea." Crank replies, deep lines on his forehead. He throws himself down to trap Buck's shins and keep him from breaking someone's ribs with his feet. "Buck, calm down! It's just us!"

"Let me go!" Buck cries out. His pupils are blown wide, and his gaze darts around the room like a trapped, feral animal's. Cold sweat peppers his sallow, sickly face.

The Krauts took him away this morning and only just brought him back a few minutes ago. No explanation, nothing. They just dumped him on one of the beds unconscious, then left without a word. Brady ran out to get Bucky, but in the meantime, Gale woke up, and the first thing he did was attack anyone who touched him. They're all going to sport bruises tomorrow, no doubt. The familiarity of their voices doesn't seem to register in his mind, and the wide-eyed terror on his face suggests he doesn't recognize their faces either.

Even with three men holding him down, Buck doesn't stop trashing to get free, but the noises he's making take an increasingly desperate edge. Crank doesn't know how to help him when he's in this state of mind. You can't reason with him.

Thankfully, the door swings open, and Bucky rushes inside, kicking the toppled over chair out of the way to get to Buck's side.

"Gale!" Bucky drops to his knees and cradles Buck's face with his large hands. Crank raises an eyebrow at the name, but he doesn't say anything. "What happened? What did they do to him?"

Fear-stricken blue eyes go abnormally wide before Buck redoubles his efforts to escape their hold. More footsteps approach from the doorway, Brady and one of the camp surgeons. The sight eases the tight worry in Crank's chest just enough that he can breathe again. Bucky nudges Hambone aside to take over holding Buck's right arm himself and to give the doc space to examine Buck.

The man takes a good look at Buck's pupils, then measures his pulse at the juncture of his neck before reaching into his coat for a small box of pills. Despite Buck's ferocious protests, the four of them somehow manage to hold him still enough for the doc to pry open his jaw and force him to swallow a pill. Immediately after, tears start falling from Buck's eyes.

Thankfully, Bucky doesn't seem to have the same struggle. As the fight goes out of Buck's body, his limbs go limp in their hold. Bucky moves Buck's arm from the floor to press it to his chest and reaches for Buck's face again. Gently, he starts wiping the wetness there even as more continues to fall. The tears glisten on Buck's freckled cheek.

It's a shock. Crank has never seen Buck Cleven cry. Through the loss of friends, through pain, cold and hunger, even on the bleakest days they've had as POWs so far, Buck's composure hardly ever wavered. He remained the pillar of their strength and hope through everything. It makes Crank feel guilty and selfish, but his first feeling upon seeing the fat teardrops rolling down Buck's scarred cheeks is despair, not compassion. His natural instinct of self-preservation makes it difficult for a moment to see past the crumbling Major and see the person instead. Because if the Krauts can break Buck Cleven like this, they can break anyone. They're all puppets to their cruel whim. Crank doesn't know what to do anymore.

"Fear gas." The doc says, making a disgusted face. "Bastards are testing it on us. My guess is they picked him for his reputation."

The doc clears his throat awkwardly and moves to stand. "Gave him a sedative. We don't have much left, but... We need the Major back on his feet, I figure."

That makes Crank feel even worse. He watches numbly as Buck opens his eyes again and blinks up at Bucky slowly. The stream of his tears

starts drying out. When Bucky gives him a small, forced smile of reassurance, Buck turns his face into Bucky's palm. As if it was the only safe spot in his world. Crank averts his eyes, and he sees Hambone and Brady do the same.

None of them wants to see. They've never asked. They don't want to know.

Only Jefferson stares, likely not used to it yet, still trying to figure it out.

After a reassuring squeeze, Bucky lays Buck's arm back on the floor and stands up to offer his hand for the doc to shake. The doc starts talking about side effects he has seen in other men who received this so-called fear gas, but after a moment, Crank turns away from them and back to Buck again.

"Give me a hand, boys." He glances at Brady and Hambone. "We gotta move him."

No one talks. They all feel Bucky's helpless fury, but there's nothing they can do. Crank rights the chair, sits on it and starts sanding the small wooden B-17 he's been working on. He keeps his focus on his work and tries not to listen in when Bucky starts whispering to Buck. He knows it's not for his ears.

Together, they lift Buck's barely conscious body and put him on a bed. It doesn't matter whose. They can switch for one night. Buck doesn't fight it anymore, dazed by the sedative. When the doc leaves, Bucky's back by his side in an instant. He sits on the edge of the bunk and puts a hand on Buck's chest to feel it rise and fall. His other hand curls into a fist on his thigh. Buck watches him with half-lidded eyes.

Tomorrow, Buck will hopefully be back on his feet. Then, they can go back to pretending that everything will be okay.

Chapter 15: Who did this to you?

Chapter Summary

Mutual pining in England

After stumbling inside their quarters at Thorpe, Bucky tries to make his way to his bed blindly in the dark. He counts his steps to measure a distance he knows well by now, but the haze of booze makes his brain sluggish, and the numbers get all jumbled up. Nevertheless, he finds the frame of his cot, locates it with fumbling hands, and lets himself sink down on the mattress with a relieved sigh.

Except, it's not his cot.

He lands on something simultaneously soft and bony, and gets kneed in the ribs so hard for it that he falls on his ass. Groaning, he gives in to gravity and goes limp on the floor.

"John?" Gale whispers somewhere above him. When Bucky grunts in response, one of their other roommates hisses a shut up their way. "What are you doing?"

"Sleeping." Bucky replies. He feels rather comfortable where he is. At least the room isn't spinning. Down here, nothing wants to crawl back out of his stomach to show him exactly how much whiskey he poured down his throat to wipe their last mission from his memory.

Slim, warm hands pat at Bucky's chest, trying to locate his shoulders in the dark. When they find a good place to grip and try to pull Bucky up, Bucky turns his head and nips at Gale's wrist.

"Come on, you big loony." Gale murmurs, completely ignoring the fact that Bucky's mouth is full of the cotton of his shirt. His teeth dig into Gale's arm. Out of curiosity, Bucky bites down harder, until Gale yanks his arm away with an annoyed huff.

"Son of a bitch." He swears under his breath, but a moment later, his hands return. They hook under Bucky's armpits to pull him up by force. "Up. On your feet, Major."

"Don't want to." Bucky whines.

As soon as Gale gets him vertical, he starts moving to lie right back down, and finds the bed Gale has just vacated. It's still warm from Gale's body. He sinks into that heat with a smile, squirming until the dip Gale's body left in the mattress fits his own. Like coming home. His drunken mind imagines it would be just as comforting to climb inside Gale's body. To be one with him. Always welcome, always safe.

"All right." Gale's tired exhale brushes Bucky's ear as Gale leans over him and tugs the blanket out from under his body to drape it over him. Tucking him in like his mama would've. Or a wife.

"Should've left me on the floor." Bucky sniffs. The urge to cry makes his throat tight, but he holds it back. He's a man, damn it.

"What kind of best friend would that make me, huh?" Gale murmurs softly. He's so close still. His hands are on Bucky's back and arm. He should lean in for a goodnight kiss, Bucky thinks. "Go to sleep, Bucky."

"S your bed."

"You can borrow it tonight."

Fingers run through Bucky's curls, a ghost of a touch, then there's nothing. Bucky turns his head into Gale's pillow because it smells like him. He falls asleep in a minute.

-

Morning arrives with a dull, heavy pain behind Bucky's eyes that he welcomes like an old friend. Most fellas get cranky when they're hungover, but it just makes Bucky feel alive. It seems as if fewer and fewer things do. Drinking. Singing, dancing, flirting. Gale.

Speaking of - Bucky should find him. Yes, that sounds like the perfect hangover cure. Getting teased by his best friend.

Still fully-clothed and wearing his boots, Bucky climbs out of bed - Gale's bed, he notes, sifting through his blurry memories from last night and coming up blank when he tries to explain it. He figures he might have tried to get in beside Gale, who thought it was better to just surrender his cot. Bucky ought'a thank him for not kicking him out to sleep on the floor.

He finds Gale by the small sink they all share, just finishing up with shaving. He's stripped down to his undershirt and his hair is not yet slicked back with product but falls over his forehead in soft bangs. It

makes him look younger. Pretty, even, if Bucky were being honest. He tries not to be though. Wouldn't do him any good.

Grinning with all his charm, he walks up to Gale and leans on the wall beside him, his free hand in his pocket. "Hey, Buck."

"Morning." Gale says without looking away from the mirror, but there's a small smile in the corner of his lips as he slides the blade over his skin.

Bucky has the strangest urge to offer to do the last few swipes for him. "Thanks for the bed."

"You're welcome." Gale's voice is amused. Although there's a shadow of exhaustion under his eyes, he looks happy, so Bucky feels safe to joke around a bit.

When Gale rinses the blade and starts wiping his face, Bucky nudges him with his foot. In return, Gale flicks water at him, which tickles Bucky into a short laugh. For the first time this morning, Gale's blue eyes meet his and give him a playful look.

"You look like that chow they used to feed us back in Texas." There it is. The teasing.

Bucky grins. "Delicious, you mean?"

For a moment that steals Bucky's breath away, Gale just holds his gaze, but then he turns back to the mirror to comb his hair. "Not the word I'd use."

That's when Bucky notices the bruise on Gale's forearm. Without thinking, he grabs Gale's hand and pulls it closer to get a better look at the mark. It's circular, red and purpling in some places, about the width of a set of teeth. A bite mark. When Bucky brushes his thumb over it, Gale's fingers twitch in his hold.

"What happened? Who did this to you?" Bucky asks with a frown. His protective anger rises behind the wall of confusion in his mind. It's a fresh bruise, can't be more than a day old. Did Gale get up to something while Bucky was at the pub yesterday?

Gale uses his free hand to hike his trousers higher up his slim waist, shifting in place, but he doesn't move the hand Bucky's holding to examine the bruise. He just stares at it, cheeks pinking. He's standing close enough that all Bucky can smell is his aftershave, fresh on his

smooth face.

"I reckon it was one of those bed-stealing fellas around here." He drawls.

Bucky swipes his thumb over the mark again distractedly before realization hits him.

"Did I do this?" He asks, horrified. When Gale hums yes, it's like a rock of guilt falling right on Bucky's heart. He lets go of Gale's hand and rubs his palm over his own face. His hangover swells into a wave of nausea he swallows back down. "Shit. I'm sorry, Buck. Can't even remember."

"It was good whiskey, huh?" Gale smiles and picks up the towel he wiped his face with earlier. When Bucky gives him an apologetic look, he swats at him with it. "It's fine, John."

A memory hits Bucky like a bucketful of ice. Back in flight school, on one of their first longer leaves, Gale actually went home to see his Ma in Wyoming because she was bedridden with a chest cold, and they feared she might pass. She made it through, but for what good, Bucky isn't sure, because Gale rarely ever writes her and hasn't been to Casper since.

But that one time, he visited his parents. Bucky won't forget how it went anytime soon. The first day Gale came back to base, he was sporting a fading shiner on his right cheek. Dark blue pain under pale skin. He clammed up about how he got it, but Bucky prodded, kept asking the same question, who did this to you? Until Gale confessed that he had a fight with his father. The man was drunk. But it's fine, John, Gale told him, pursing his lips. Nothing that won't heal.

Discomfort ripples through Bucky, bitter on his tongue and heavy in his heart. Gale's smiling now, unlike that day in flight school, but there are too many similarities. Bucky has to, he needs to make it better.

"I didn't mean to hurt you." He says sincerely.

"I know." Gale nods.

Bucky bites his lip. He can't think of anything else to make it clearer that he's nothing like Gale's bastard of a father. There's so little he can give. He has nothing to offer but his company. "Let me make it up to you. Come to London with me. We could both use a break. Let's go

paint the town red."

The tip of Gale's pink tongue pokes out between his lips for a second as he considers it. Instinctively, Bucky's gaze drops to the motion before he looks back to Gale's eyes again. "I don't know about that."

There's a wariness in his voice that wasn't there before. Bucky hates it. He doesn't know what put it there, but he wants it gone. He claps a hand on Gale's elbow and gives him a friendly squeeze. "Come on. We can go look at all the sights you wanna see, then I'll take you to a pub and buy you the best ginger beer you've ever had."

Gale gives him a lopsided smile. "Is that a bet?"

Bucky smirks. "A promise." He moves to take Gale's place at the sink, but Gale doesn't step back immediately, which puts their faces so close to each other that for a split second, Bucky imagines crossing the remaining distance. "Tell you what. We could even split the hotel costs."

A fond light shines in Gale's eyes. He steps away with a chuckle and throws the towel at Bucky. "Go wash your face, Egan."

Grinning, Bucky opens the tap and does just that. That wasn't a no, he notes. Excitement tingles in his limbs. His blood pumps warm joy through his body with every heartbeat. He has never felt more alive than this, but he wonders if he could. And if yes... would London do the trick?

Chapter 16: Intimacy

Chapter Summary

A short drabble about canon au John and Gale post-sex

Before the first kiss he pressed to Gale's lips - in that dark alley behind the pub, pretending to be drunk - Bucky thought Gale would be the type who was sparing with his affection, always careful not to give too much away. But, for the first time in years, he misjudged his best friend. Perhaps it was because he never saw him in love before or because Gale hid this side of himself behind the closed bedroom door, but either way, Bucky's surprised.

Here, in the privacy of their hotel in London, Gale is sweet and relaxed, matching the greediness of Bucky's questing hands with his own. They've made each other come three times already, but he still smiles in delight every time Bucky noses his way up his neck to kiss his lips, and he pulls Bucky's thigh over his naked hips like he wants to fuck him again. His eyes look shiny with joy when Bucky looks into them.

"How was that?" Bucky asks, voice hoarse from having Gale's cock down his throat just moments ago.

"Good." Gale says, his smile pulling at his lips slowly until his teeth peek out. His cheeks are round and pink as he stares at Bucky with his head tilted to the side.

The sight grips Bucky's heart like a vice, and he's helpless against the pull of Gale's hand that draws him into another lazy kiss.

"I like it when you do that." Gale says against his lips. His voice is so deep that it sounds like a purr.

"Do what?" Bucky grins. He wants to hear him say it.

Although a part of him still expects Gale to shy away from the conversation, considering the past few hours, he's not that surprised when Gale replies without hesitation. "When you suck my cock."

Bucky snickers against Gale's cheek, feeling like he can't stay still in his joy. "Tell me what you liked the most."

This does make Gale falter for a moment, words catching in his throat

as he tries to work through his embarrassment. "You know it was my first time." He says evasively, weaving his fingers between Bucky's.

"Hmm." Bucky hums, hand-wrestling with Gale until Gale rolls them over to sit on him and pins Bucky's wrists to the mattress. The wetness on Bucky's thighs smears on his legs, but neither of them minds. "Come on, tell me what you liked."

Again, Bucky thinks that Gale might pull back in some way, but he doesn't. He folds himself down until he's lying on Bucky with his full weight and he cradles Bucky's cheeks to kiss him through a smile again. "When you said you loved me."

Bucky barks a laugh, even as the butterflies in his stomach flutter. "I didn't say that."

Gale kisses his temple, then his jaw. "Sorry. You said you loved my cock."

"Jesus Christ, Buck."

Gale leans close over Bucky's face, blue eyes sparkling with mischief. "That too."

They share another kiss, then Gale pulls away to pillow his head on John's chest. They fall silent, just listening to each other's breathing. The quiet feels comfortable, relaxing. John strokes Gale's arms. He marvels at the deceptive strength of them and the way they tuck so close to his torso, like a hug. Wonders if Gale was just as starved for this as he was. Smiling, he traces the shell of Gale's ear with a finger.

"I wanna show you what it feels like the other way around." He says.

"Okay." Gale sighs, as if the thought of getting fucked made him happy. "Whenever you're ready, John."

Bucky makes an incredulous sound. "Jesus, doll, give me a minute here. It ain't a race now, is it?"

Gale nips at the curve of Bucky's pec. "S'pose not." He raises his head to look into Bucky's eyes. He takes a deep breath.

"I like knowing that you're a man." He looks away, his smile fading into something more serious.

"I liked that I could feel your mustache when you kissed my thighs. I

liked your hands and your ass and the sounds you made. I liked pulling you off. Liked it too much, I reckon." He chuckles, self-deprecation dark in his voice. "It was even better than I imagined. And yeah, I imagined it before. What does that make me?"

Bucky pinches Gale's chin gently between his fingers and turns his head back until their eyes meet again. "It makes you my lover."

Gale casts his eyes down, then smiles softly to himself before he looks back up. "I could do worse, I guess."

Bucky grins and pulls Gale into a kiss.

Chapter 17: "Body Swap"

Chapter Summary

Short drabble written for the prompt "body swap"

Chapter Notes

(I'm sorry about posting all of these at once - I think there's only one more left)

There's a sweet familiarity to the throbbing ache of a hangover, Bucky thinks as he turns to lie on his back in his cot. He can just sink into the misery of it, then chase it with the hair of the dog, let the poison make it better. That's what he needs. Something to make getting up only three or four hours after he went to sleep worth it. And Gale. Yeah, Gale would already be there in the mess hall, waiting for him with one of his muted smiles.

Now, that's something that would get Bucky out of bed even if he was dying.

He rolls himself up to sit on the edge of the bed but a sharp, piercing pain slices through his thigh.

"Ugh, Jesus Christ." He hisses through gritted teeth, his hand tearing the thin army-issued blanket away to see what hurt him. "Fuck! What the fuck!"

There's a splotch of red spreading on his boxers. Cursing under his breath, he rucks up the material and finds a sizeable gash with the skin held together by stitches. His careless movements pulled at the edge of it wrong and made it bleed a little.

He can't remember getting wounded there.

"What..." He blinks, confusion and panic settling in.

Those are not his legs. His muscular thighs have been replaced by ones much slimmer, the thick, dark coils seem to have vanished to give way to sparse blond hair, and where he's usually white as a sheet his skin now sports a pinkish hue. Small moles dot the limbs where there should be none.

Bucky's breathing so fast that he feels lightheaded. He racks his brain for an explanation, but the only plausible one is that the special brew he won off the goddamn Brits last night was spiked with something freaky. Of course, those pricks would pull something like this. He runs a hand through his hair to try calm himself down, but instead of the familiar pattern of his curls, he combs through straighter, silkier strands. He jerks his hand away to look at it and that's when he realizes -

These are Gale's hands. His hair, his skin, his slim legs. Even his voice, the low rumble of it, isn't because Bucky sang himself hoarse last night. It's Gale's voice.

"Jesus Christ." Bucky repeats, whispering from the shock. He looks up and Marge's framed photo stares back at him from Gale's bedside. And just across from him - "Shit!"

It's surreal to see his own body from the outside. For a moment, he fears that he's dead, but his body stirs and curls up tighter on his side, his hands tucked under his pillow.

Like Gale's usually are when he's asleep.

Swallowing against the alarm making his head throb, Bucky pushes himself up to pad over to his body - to Gale, his heart knows - despite the pain lancing through his thigh and a stiffness in his back that shouldn't be there. Even through his racing thoughts, one stands out loud and clear. Gale has been hiding his wounds from him.

That hurts more than the physical pain.

With a shaking hand, he touches Gale's - his own - shoulder. Eyes Bucky only ever sees in the mirror snap open, widen, and without any further preamble, a fist swings out and clocks him in the face. The world goes dark again.

When Bucky wakes up again, he's in the softest, warmest bed known to man, and someone's arm lies limp across his face, right where his nose throbs with a slowly fading pain. He gasps as his mind reconnects to the present and realizes that the war has long been over and he's lying on the mattress he shares with Gale.

Relieved, he grabs for his own thigh and finds it unmarred under the duvet. It's just as meaty as it should be, the hair on it familiar as he draws his palm over it. On his upper lip, his mustache covers the skin. He sighs as his heartbeat slows. Only his face hurts, and that's

apparently because Gale swung his arm out in his sleep.

Carefully, he folds that arm back over Gale's torso, then reaches under the covers. Gale moves with him, turning to his side in a way that suggests he thinks Bucky wants to spoon, but he grunts when Bucky's hand smooths over his thigh to trace the old scar there.

"I had a weird dream." Bucky whispers, molding himself to the curve of Gale's body for comfort. "We were back in Thorpe and I was in your body."

Gale breathes in and out slowly. "I'm not in the mood." He mumbles.

"No, I mean, I were you and you were me, Buck. We switched bodies. It was damn scary, let me tell ya. Then you punched me." When he gets no response, Bucky continues. "Imagine seeing yourself from the outside. Can't lie, it left me terrified."

Gale's hum rumbles in his chest where he presses Bucky's hand to his heart. "Sleep, hon."

Taking a deep breath, Bucky closes his eyes and tries to obey. He doubts that Gale will remember any of this conversation in the morning. He'll tell him again during breakfast. It will earn him a smile, he's sure.

Chapter 18: Domestic post-war sickfic

Chapter Summary

Gale gets sick, Bucky comforts him.

Chapter Notes

This one is very old actually, I just never got around to posting it or expanding on it.

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

It's cold. So cold, that Gale thinks he's back in Germany for a few seconds, locked in the filthy hopelessness of the stalag, with no end in sight. He's swimming in sweat but his body trembles nevertheless. Icy pain rolls down his neck in waves. He can't get any air through his nose so he tries to sleep with his mouth open, but that just makes his throat ache that much more. He wishes he could stop breathing long enough to fall asleep, but no such luck. The duvet doesn't wrap around him tight enough. Curled up miserably on his side of the bed, he can't do anything but convalesce. Even his bones hurt.

The front door opens downstairs, but it's too early for John to be home. Robbers? But there's no sound of clinking china or cabinets being opened, only the jiggle of keys and then familiar, heavy footsteps up the creaking stairs. The bedroom door opens softly, then the world's most annoying voice whispers into the stale air of the room.

"Is our pretty little patient still with us?" When Gale ignores him, Bucky's socked feet thread across the carpet to the bed. His fingers drum on the wooden footboard. If Gale had the strength, he'd kick him. "Or did he become a butterfly?"

"What the goddamn hell are you talking about?" Gale gripes, his voice hoarse as though he was dying. He doesn't open his eyes. He has no interest in seeing Bucky's mug when he's getting on Gale's nerves like that.

"Well, you look like a giant caterpillar all cocooned up."

Gale doesn't deign that worthy of a reply. He pulls the duvet the rest

of the way over his head. There's nothing he wants to see in the room anyway. He just wants to be left alone. Glass thuds on the bedside table.

"Got you some cold syrup."

The cover is pulled back from Gale's face and a pleasantly cool, dry palm presses to his forehead. Bucky sighs. When he speaks again, the joking tone drops from his voice. "That's gotta be a fever."

He wipes the sweat from Gale's temple with his hand, then the bed dips by Gale's side. He hears clinking and banging, then a large palm slides under his head and pulls to prop it up. He cracks his eyes open to slits only to see Bucky bent over him with a spoonful of vile medicine in his free hand. Gale tries to push it away.

"Don't be a child, Buck, open up."

"Says the one yapping about caterpillars." Gale mumbles, so slow that he thinks Bucky won't let him finish the sentence, but he does. He looks amused, despite the tinges of worry around his eyes.

"Someone ought'a have a sense of humor."

"Wouldn't bet on us." Gale squints at Bucky again, satisfied to see the flash of his grin.

But still, Bucky doesn't let up - he holds the spoon in front of Gale's mouth until Gale sighs and swallows the syrup in it. "There."

Gale sinks back into the cushions and turns away from him, rolling closer to Bucky's side of the bed. It's tempting to steal his pillow but with the clogged nose, Gale wouldn't be able to smell him anyway. A hand rests on his shoulder, Bucky's thumb stroking.

"Care for some company?" Bucky asks. When Gale remains silent again, he continues filling the quiet. "I phoned my boss, told him I was sick."

"What, we share a body now?" Gale grumbles. "What if you do get sick?"

"Then I didn't lie, did I? If I get sick, I'd have caught it anyway, what with this narrow thing you picked." He pats the bed.

"You gave me the wrong measurements."

"Just admit that you wanna sleep in my arms."

"Did you get something for your head?"

Bucky laughs to himself in low chuckles, then Gale hears the rustle of clothes, the clink of a belt. The duvet pulls away from his back, leaving him freezing where the sweat-soaked pyjama shirt sticks to his skin. But he doesn't have to suffer for long. The bed dips further, then a warm, naked chest presses to his back. Bucky tucks in the covers around them, then slips his arms around Gale to hold him close. It feels like heaven.

Gale snuffles. "I'm disgusting."

Bucky sighs as though he's happy. He kisses Gale's overheated neck. "Course you are, you little caterpillar."

Gale grits his teeth. "Go away."

"No can do." He holds Gale tighter to his chest, and the shivers subside. "I'm sick, after all."

Gale decides not to say anything else. He remains irritated for two more minutes, then Bucky's warmth starts seeping into him through his clothes. He breathes out and falls asleep.

Chapter End Notes

With this one, I'm closing this particular drabble collection. Thank you so much if you read any of the drabbles! ♥◻ As always, you can find me on Tumblr as avonne-writes.

Works inspired by this one

[Carry You Home](#) by [Avonne](#)

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!